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COUNTRY Poland

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SUBJECT Factory Sabotage at Elblag

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1. The recently rebuilt marine machine and turbine factory at the site of the former German factory Schichau Werfte at Elblag (Elbing), east of Gdansk, was completely destroyed by fire at the end of July, 1949.
2. The Schichau Werfte factory was completely dismantled after seizure by the Russians, but subsequently it was rebuilt and re-equipped by the Polish Government for the manufacture of marine machines and turbines. The factory machine installations were purchased from England. Production began in early 1949 and about 1500 workers were employed.
3. In late July, 1949, the entire factory was razed by fire, with a total loss of all equipment and installations. The cause was attributed to sabotage action, as the fire is reported to have begun simultaneously at several points. Machines burned in such a way as to indicate that they had been prepared for burning by coatings of oil or other inflammable materials, and all fire-fighting apparatus had also been destroyed; firehoses had been cut, water taps jammed, and alarm and telephone communications severed. The damage caused was enormous and was estimated at more than two billion Polish zlotys. The most significant part of the loss was the loss of the much needed production and the irreplaceable imported machines and machine tools that were destroyed.
4. The sabotage action was attributed to the Polish underground military organization active in the provinces of Gdansk and Olsztyn. Numerous suspects were arrested, but it is believed the principal persons involved have not yet been apprehended.

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